

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

In response to the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §112 and the objections to the drawings and the specification, claim 20 has been amended. As amended, claim 20 now provides that the pulleys on the first and second arms of the tensioner, rather than the arms themselves, contact the belt. The amended claim language is supported at least by Figs. 1 and 2. Moreover, identical claim language in claim 23 was not previously objected to by the Examiner. In light of the amendment to claim 20, applicant respectfully submits that no amendment to the drawings or specification is needed.

Claims 1-5, 7-12, 15-19, 21, 23, 25 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent 58-178042. In response to these rejections, independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 18 have been amended.

In paragraph 9 of the Office action dated November 3, 2003, the Examiner contends that the phrase "AGS pulley" should not be given any patentable weight because there is no particular claimed structure that associates the pulley with an AGS system. Although applicant strenuously disagrees with the Examiner and believes that a person of skill in the art would recognize that an AGS pulley is connected to an AGS system, applicant has amended the claims to explicitly state that the AGS pulley is connected to an AGS system. This amendment is supported by the written description and does not constitute new matter. Additionally, the Examiner asserts in paragraph 9 that whether the pulley is an AGS pulley or any other named pulley does not change the scope of the invention. Applicant respectfully disagrees for the reasons discussed below.

As stated in the application, innovations in the automobile industry have led to the use of AGS systems that combine the alternator, generator and starter functions. As is well known in the art, AGS systems are typically engaged with the automobile crankshaft via a belt and pulley system. When the AGS system operates as a starter, the AGS pulley, which is connected to the AGS system, may drive the belt. By contrast, when the AGS system operates as an alternator the AGS pulley may be driven by the belt. In view of these different operating conditions, a tensioner system is desired that is capable of maintaining proper tension in all spans of the belt drive for all operating conditions.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection completely ignores a meaningful limitation in each of the independent claims. Specifically, the claimed belt system includes a crankshaft pulley and an AGS (alternator/generator/starter) pulley, which is connected to an AGS system. Applicant's invention is not simply a fixed offset tensioner as the rejection suggests. Rather, applicant's invention is a drive system in which the fixed offset tensioner is used in conjunction with an AGS pulley and a crankshaft pulley.

Upon further review of the drawings of the cited Japanese patent, it appears that this reference illustrates a device for instantaneously varying the angular phase of an output shaft relative to an input shaft during revolution of both shafts. The English abstract of the reference identifies shaft 28 as the input or driving shaft and shaft 12' as the output or driven shaft. Accordingly, pulley 30 is the driving pulley and pulley 32 is the driven pulley. In fact, because there is no suggestion in the drawings or abstract that shaft 12' ever drives the system or that shaft 28 is ever driven by the belt, it is apparent that pulley 30 is always the driving pulley and pulley 32 is always a driven pulley. Accordingly, there is no indication that the disclosed system includes an AGS pulley connected to an AGS system as claimed.

In as much as the cited reference does not include an element of the independent claims, namely an AGS pulley, the applicant submits that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 must fail. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the anticipation rejection be withdrawn with respect to each pending claim.

Claims 6, 13-14, 21, 24 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over the combined teachings of the Japanese patent in view of U.S. Patent 4,069,719 to Cancilla. Cancilla is cited as teaching a tensioner including a resilient member.

Applicant respectfully submits that the §103 rejection has likewise been overcome by the amendment of claims 1, 9, 16 and 18. Specifically, as with respect to the anticipation rejection, the §103 rejection ignores an express limitation in the independent claims from which the rejected claims depend. The references that are relied upon, either alone or in combination, do not teach a power transmission belt system having an AGS pulley and a crankshaft pulley as claimed. In accordance with the invention, a specific type of tensioner is used in a specific drive system,

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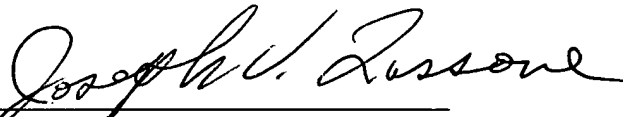
namely, a system employing an AGS pulley and a crankshaft pulley. The drive system and method defined by the claims are not suggested by the combined teachings of the references.

In view of the foregoing, favorable action on the merits is requested.

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~~Respectfully submitted,~~

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